

MR. THRIFTY PENSACOLIAN, LISTEN! THIS IS UP TO YOU!

The Old St. Michael's, a Valuable and Ancient Landmark, is Approaching Ruin. Help in the Work of its Future Preservation.

By Bonnie Burnham.

When Pensacola occasionally breaks into print, for the edification and the general improvement of the outside world, it isn't necessarily because of her pretty girls, her old time antebellum fire water imbibing colonels, nor her particularly sensational atmosphere in any one respect. When you read about the Deep Water City in fact, from a long distance point of view, even, you are fully convinced that a city of so much evident enterprise and capability must necessarily be the careless possessor of pretty girls told by the score, and that her colonels and other rambunctious gentlemen of the old type must needs be every iota as fire eating and altogether fully as picturesque as you would wish them to be.

Pensacola is known to the world at large, in fact, more by her remarkable claim on the early history of this country, and for the possession of ruins of a time that is forever past more than from any other source. The landmarks of a reign which was chivalry's own are hers and hers individually, characterizing her as a quaint and an interesting old curiosity shop of this section of the country, and placing her upon a pedestal from which she is worshipped, along with her present day bustling mercantile classes by the dreamy-eyed artist, a dweller in other worlds, and the lover of historical research as well!

If you were a stranger to Pensacola, and searched the available literature concerning her past and present, you would find a general dispute in progress relative to her claim as the oldest city in the United States. This claim, you would find, would be disputed perhaps from two and perhaps three different sources, and Pensacola relegated back to a position of third mapah, in the must laden, shadowy list. An argument, also disputed, would probably call your attention to the ancient burying ground of St. Michael's, some authorities contending that this is the oldest cemetery in the states. Duly disputed from various and diverse sources, this, too, you would discover has not been generally accepted. But the city with her ancient landmarks, duly advertised from the valuable point of contention stands prominent in the interest of the country at large from this very acceptable condition of divided opinion.

The Old St. Michael's Cemetery. Have you ever wandered an hour in the mystery and quiet of the old St. Michael's cemetery, mould covered, and choked with the ivy from many graves? Have you stood, in sacred communion, with the thousands of peaceful sleepers about you,

and watched the sun as it sinks from sight for the night? The soft sighing breezes, playful, coquettish and coy with the leaves of protecting magnolias above you—entail you in to spells that you would not shake off if you could!

That oak over there has stood silent sentinel for two hundred years or more, and has mingled its sympathy, mute from its branches above, as each tiny funeral assemblage has appeared in the ancient place, and laid its beloved at the feet of its forest protector!

A Notable Spot.

Aside from the real picturesque of the old portion of St. Michael's, there is a small majority of persons who now reside in the city of Pensacola who realize for one moment that men and women who have helped make the country's weal and woe are sleeping their last sleep under the ruin and devastation which has been allowed to accumulate over that portion of the grounds. In many instances, there is no living representative of the families of which the deserted occupants of the unkempt graves were members. They, in fact, belonged to a past that is gone and forgotten. Their memory, blinked out in the course of later events, grew gradually into misty tradition, which, although linked unalterably with the city, were traditions nevertheless!

A sign of the great declaration of independence lies sleeping just inside the old west wall, and his companions are representatives of the best pioneer blood of the infant "new world." Here lies a man who died, well possessed with the goods of the world—his grave is as neglected and tangled with the growth of many seasons as that of the poor common sailor, who, from a foreign port, came to Pensacola to finish the task of dying, and to sleep afterwards under a rotten, wooden cross which had served as the modest designation of his last resting place.

Here is the last earthly sign of a man who had been full of valor and courage in war; even he is allowed to join the rank and file as it slumbers there in a mute appeal toward the forgetfulness and oblivion of man—and the waxen leaved ivy, ever hastening to cover up every defect, creeps silently, lovingly, protectively over the landmarks of time!

Must Receive Attention.

If you had been attracted by widespread accounts of a ruin like this one, and had joined the crowds of pleasure seekers and the curiosity loving populace of a country in order to see for yourself, and to dream over relics of bygone times to your heart's content, wouldn't you prefer to be

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greeted by ruins which were well kept like those which have beckoned the new world to the old since time immemorial, and has proved the source of untiring interest to the average globe-trotting American?

There is a fine point to be drawn between the terms "ruin" and "devastation." "Ruins" now are a legitimate source of profit and trade; they present, perhaps, one of the principal sources of attraction which the place has to offer to an exacting outside world, and they should be well kept up, from a speculative point of view if nothing more.

They should not be allowed to present the devastated, pitifully deserted appearance which is presently the case in some portions of the matchless St. Michael's, far be it from such, but an order quickly and systematically established, and an air of certain up-to-date progression and care made to pervade it all.

The recent agitation which has been evident among the foremost local societies and the far seeing citizens of Pensacola, has been grateful indeed. Let the good work go on, and out of a state of chaotic confusion, a native attraction enhanced and established which will be of value indeed to the city!

The Work in Hand.

As has been previously suggested, let every Pensacolian worthy of the name, take upon himself the care and improvement of at least one lonely, neglected grave at St. Michael's. Let the ancient quaintness of the place prevail, by all means, but let it at once become apparent that this priceless relic of the past is a thing of value to the present citizenry of Pensacola, rather than a ghastly, filthy, weakening place where a crawling, creeping thing holds high carnival in the utter collapse which reigns unmoled throughout the years as they pass. The air of the place can be readily preserved, and far from destroying the charm of the ancient burying ground, its attractiveness may be only preserved and enabled to endure throughout the ages which it may yet stand, as a dim reminder of brave men and noble women gone before—sleeping, sleeping in that long and dreamless slumber, which knoweth no awakening!

The preservation of "old St. Michael's" demands your personal attention at once. Local philanthropists have already fostered the movement, but they need public co-operation.

If the poetic, historical sentiment of the situation does not appeal to you, then consider it from the standpoint of a cold business proposition and govern yourself accordingly. Ancient attractions such as this shadowy old burying ground depicted are becoming scarce throughout the country, and are rapidly proving a source of unending curiosity on the part of the hey day world of today and tomorrow—you had best preserve this one of the city's most valuable assets from a sure and certain decay, such as will surely result if present conditions are allowed to continue.

Pensacola needs your help in this matter. The call is an imperative one, and should be answered.

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Strong Argument Against The Convict Lease System

—Jacksonville Metropolis.—

Give fair and honest thought to the question in its every phase, moral, financial and political, and you, Mr. Florida Cracker, native or adopted, will give to the question that the system of leasing convicts to private parties, which afflicts Florida and several other states, is both iniquitous and disgustingly un-American. The system, you will agree, is one that should not be countenanced by a people who stand ready, like their forefathers, to give their lives for the cause of freedom, and who look to the Stars and Stripes for their inspiration.

The recent disgusting revelations brought out by an investigation of the system in that state by the Georgia legislature show the system to be an absciss on the body politic of a commonwealth that has always taken the lead in fighting for good and pure government, and that has produced an even larger number of great and brilliant statesmen than Virginia, the Mother of Presidents." Georgia, the people of which stand for morality of government, even to a Puritanical standard, has been forced to bow her head in shame at the revelations made—revelations not only of inhuman treatment of prisoners, but revelations of shame, of lying and common thievery on the part of prominent and honored citizens, several of whom hold positions in the eyes of their constituents and fellow citizens as unenviable as those held by men in high places whose rottenness was revealed by the insurance investigations in New York.

Florida, fortunately for the state's reputation, has been the victim of no such revelations, although frequent reports from various sections of the state have made it plain to even the most casual reader that conditions have been and are anything but what they should be. The Metropolis does not believe any amount of investigation would reveal in Florida as bad a condition as prevails in Georgia, but our sister state and her disgrace has little or nothing to do with the question, which is not one to be looked at from a standpoint of mere sentiment, but from a viewpoint of business and common justice.

The present lessees of the Florida convicts are good, progressive and humane Floridians. They undoubtedly do all they can to prevent abuses of any character in connection with the handling of convicts. Their success or lack of success, though, has little or nothing to do with the question. The system is wrong, from its foundation, and should be abolished before the next legislative session closes. In the first place, the days of Egyptian bondage are, or should be, a thing of the past, and the Emancipation Proclamation, much to the regret of the people of our southern states at the time of its publication, put an end to the bartering of human beings on the slave blocks of Natchez, Richmond and other southern cities. In recent years, however, these auction blocks have been, to speak figuratively, removed to Tallahassee, Atlanta and other southern capitals. The men, women and children put up for sale at prices that would bring a blush of shame to a prizeless poodle at a tenth-rate dog show, are not ignorant savages brought from the African jungles—they are intelligent, sensitive beings a majority of whom, having fallen victims to temptation once, given again become useful citizens if given opportunity and a small mode of encouragement. Even though they have fallen and passed beyond the pale of respectability, have the people of a great state the right to increase their suffering and shame by selling them into bondage many times more degraded than that into which the false brothers of Joseph sold him?

There are men in Florida today, who, having served time for some misdeed, are making of themselves good and useful citizens. "I am outliving my disgrace, and am again on the road to success and happiness, in which my beloved wife and children have their share," said one of these, an able business man, to the writer of this article, "but I cannot get over the fact that I was once sold into slavery, at the instigation of citizens of a great state, for an insignificant sum of less than thirty dollars a month. I did wrong, and paid the penalty as bravely as I could, but why should I have been forced to wear the slave-dealer's lash on my heart?"

Yes, for a moral and humane standpoint, the system is wrong. The system is also wrong, from a financial point of view. Attack the system and a hue and cry is raised about the "immense" revenue derived by the state from the hire of convicts. This is a huge joke, at which the thoughtless public often does. The prices paid for these convicts are not "immense"—they are sorrowfully, ridiculously low. Consider the vast amount that the various Florida counties have in recent years paid for the hire of men to build good roads, compare this amount with that received from the hire of convicts, and you will see where the joke is on you, Mr. Taxpayer. Furthermore, the work of trotting from "sun-up to sun-down" through the pine forests of the state, and the delving in phosphate beds for the same period and under the same high pressure, is financially unjust to the intelligent prisoner, who, after serving a term, is turned out into the world with no trade knowledge sufficient to give him a new start in life. The acts of trotting from one pine tree to another and swinging a pick in a phosphate mine are undoubtedly great mental developers, aren't they?

Politically, the system is equally wrong, for it opens an unprecedented broad avenue for graft, the fruit of which avenue, in poor old Georgia must be beaten to emery stone hardness by the pounding of many feet of many grafters. The Metropolis would not suggest for a moment that graft has ever held sway in our fair state of Florida—the climate is unhealthy for the graft germ in this grand state—but you can't always sometimes tell

what will happen. Could Florida, in the management of the convict lease system, ever reach the low plane of her neighboring state of Georgia? Impossible! We shudder at the thought of such an insinuation. But the idea of unfortunate fallen human beings being made the subjects for the money-mad gyrations of political grafters. Isn't it an inspiring one?

We often read of cruel treatment of convicts in the various camps of the state, and then we read as many strenuous denials. The average convict has very little that is angelic in his nature, else he would not be a convict, and some oftentimes need a dose of "strap oil." But, gentle reader, did you ever have the sublime pleasure of gazing upon the manly figure of a typical Florida "whipping boss"? If not, you have missed something in life. You have missed seeing one whose kindness of heart and tenderness of spirit is so evident that it reminds you of those highly colored Biblical pictures of the good Samaritan that you use to study in childhood days. Every citizen of Florida should be allowed to see at least one example of the "whipping boss," and after one glance at the benign face and sylph-like figure he would say—well, he would say: "For the sake of Florida's reputation and the sake of suffering humanity, the state take care of its convicts and watch over the poor devils." The "whipping boss" and superintendent of a turpentine or phosphate camp are expected to produce results, and it matters not how kind the nature of their employer may be, they are going to get results or know the reason why.

For their own sakes, for the financial benefit and upbuilding of the state, and for the complete abolishment of slavery, Florida should herself handle the unfortunate—those who may again rise above their circumstances and the hopeless degenerates as well—and from the attitude of the public on this important subject, the Metropolis hopes and believes that steps will be taken to abolish the system at the next session of the legislature.

Every man and woman who is interested in the cause of humanity and the cause of good government should appoint himself or herself a committee of one to work incessantly with this end in view.

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GERMANS TURN TO FISH.

High Prices Cause Decline in Consumption of Meats.

The people of Germany, according to Consul Herman L. Spahr, of Breslau, are turning to the use of fish because of the high price of meats. He says the price of hogs in Breslau at the end of April was forty-six to fifty marks (\$40.50 to \$12.85) per fifty (110.23 pounds) against forty to fifty marks (\$35 to \$11.90) at the same time last year. The high prices of meat during recent years has brought about a large advance in the consumption of fish in Germany.

For the encouragement of the German sea fishery transportation methods had been improved and special markets established throughout the interior, but the demand for the sea fish was slow of growth until meat prices soared. Now an increase is visible everywhere, particularly, it is said, in Bavaria and Wurtemberg.

A Breslau newspaper estimates that Germany's consumption of fish is now eighteen per cent of the meat consumption.

Computation is based on the 1907 catch, which, after deducting imports and exports, amounted to 408,772 tons. The inland fishery is not included in this figure, as there are no available statistics concerning it. The 1907 supply per capita was 6.63 kilos (14.62 pounds), while the meat supply, exclusive of home killings, game and poultry, was 2,450,000 tons, or 33.3 kilos (73.74 pounds) per capita. The ratio was one to six, but the first quarter of 1908 shows an increase in the sea-fish supply of 14,607 tons (12.1 per cent) over the same quarter of last year.

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